



Teacher Voice

NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus February 2012 Survey

**School reform, job satisfaction, performance
management, and Oxbridge**

The Sutton Trust

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Introduction

The Sutton Trust submitted 13 questions to NFER's Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey in February 2012. The questions covered the following topics:

- academies and Free Schools
- job satisfaction
- performance management and a professional body for teachers
- applications and admissions to Oxbridge

This report provides an analysis of the responses to the questions, along with supporting information about the survey. Results are presented by school phase (primary and secondary) and by teacher seniority level (classroom teachers or senior leaders).

This report forms one part of the output from the Omnibus survey. The analysis is also presented and given in more detail in a set of interactive web-based tables produced separately (in Pulsar Web).

Context

Recent years have seen many changes occurring in the education system. These will impact on children and young people's experiences of education and, potentially, their outcomes at school and beyond. As part of its mission to improve educational opportunities for young people from non-privileged backgrounds and to increase social mobility, the Sutton Trust commissioned NFER to investigate teachers' views on some of the most important changes and issues in education today.

One of the most significant changes within recent years is the introduction of academies and Free Schools. Opinions on this move towards increased school autonomy have been mixed, especially in relation to educational inequality. For example, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove in discussing the Academies Act 2010-12, stated that one of its aims is "*to ensure...that a child's background does not dictate whether they succeed*".¹ However, a review of the free school reforms in Sweden concluded that they had increased social segregation and inequality in achievement. The review also warned that similar reforms in England "*may have more damaging effects*" in these areas². These

¹ Hansard (2010). Academies Bill Second Reading [online]. Available <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100607-0003.htm> [16 March 2012]

² Wiborg, S (2010). *Swedish Free Schools: Do they work?* p.19 [online]. Available <http://www.llakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Wiborg-online.pdf>

concerns were echoed by the majority of teachers in previous NFER research for the Sutton Trust in 2010³.

Social equality within the Higher Education sector is also an important issue for the Trust. It estimates that every year, 3000 pupils with disadvantaged backgrounds, but appropriate qualifications, do not apply to selective universities and go elsewhere. The Trust suggested that this might be partly due to “*negative perceptions or misunderstandings of elite universities by some teachers*”⁴. The Trust has a particular interest in the under-representation of state school pupils at Oxbridge. Previous research has shown that secondary school teachers underestimate the proportion of Oxbridge students that come from the maintained sector, while many do not encourage their academically gifted students to apply for Oxbridge⁵. Given the drive in recent years to address this under-representation, it is of interest to the Trust to discover whether teachers’ perceptions and the advice they give to their students have changed.

³ NFER (2010). *The Government’s education reforms* [online]. Available <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/what-we-offer/teacher-voice/PDFs/Sutton-Trust-Nov2010.pdf> [15 March 2012]

⁴ The Sutton Trust (2010). *Submission to Sir Martin Harris: Widening access to selective universities* p.3 [online]. Available <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/sutton-trust-submission-to-sir-martin-harris/>

⁵ Ipsos Mori (2007). *Teachers Omnibus for the Sutton Trust* [online]. Available <http://www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/1TeachersOmnibus2007REPORT.pdf> [14 March 2012]

Analysis of findings

The sample

A sample of over 1600 teachers completed the survey. The sample was weighted to ensure that it was representative. The sample included teachers from a wide range of school governance types and subject areas. Sample numbers were sufficient to allow for comparisons between the primary and secondary sectors. Detailed information about the sample is given in the supplementary section of this report.

Academies and Free Schools

The initial questions submitted to the Teacher Voice survey asked teachers about their views on schools becoming academies under different circumstances.

Table 1 shows that nearly half (46%) of teachers considered it a bad idea for schools to apply to convert to academy status following a decision by the governing body. About a fifth (22%) considered it a good idea, while almost a third (32%) responded 'don't know'. As the table shows, primary and secondary teachers responded very similarly. However, views differed by seniority. Specifically, senior leaders were proportionally twice as likely as classroom teachers to think that it is a good idea for schools to apply for academy status under these circumstances (38% compared with 18%, respectively).

Table 1. What do you personally think about schools applying to convert to academy status following a decision of the governing body?

	All	Primary	Secondary
A good idea	22%	21%	24%
A bad idea	46%	46%	47%
Don't know	32%	33%	29%
Local base (N)	1677	923	750

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

The next question asked for teachers' views on poorly performing schools that are eligible for intervention being required to become academies by the Government. As Table 2 shows, most (67%) teachers considered this a bad idea, while only seven per cent felt that it is a good idea. Again, a large proportion (26%) said that they do not know. As the table shows, there were small differences between the opinions of primary and secondary teachers, with a slightly higher proportion of the latter being in favour of it. Senior leaders were slightly more likely to disagree with this approach (72% compared with 65% of classroom teachers).

Table 2. What do you personally think about poorly performing schools (eligible for intervention) being required to become academies by the Government?

	All	Primary	Secondary
A good idea	7%	5%	11%
A bad idea	67%	69%	64%
Don't know	26%	27%	25%
Local base (N)	1672	921	748

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

The next question explored teachers' views on Free Schools. As Table 3 shows, about two-thirds of teachers (67%) were not in favour of the Government's policy to encourage the setting up of Free Schools. As with the questions about academies, a large proportion of teachers (22%) responded 'don't know' to this question. Views were quite similar by school phase but differed by seniority. Senior leaders were proportionally more likely to disagree with Government policy than classroom teachers (77% compared with 64%, respectively). In addition, proportionally fewer classroom teachers felt informed enough to offer a strong opinion (25% responded 'don't know', compared with 13% of senior leaders).

Table 3. Are you in favour of the Government's policy to encourage the setting up of Free Schools?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Yes	11%	9%	13%
No	67%	66%	68%
Don't know	22%	25%	19%
Local base (N)	1672	921	747

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Job satisfaction

The next set of questions addressed teachers' job satisfaction, and included the opportunity to identify their top three causes of dissatisfaction, if any. As Table 4 shows, nearly three-quarters of teachers (73%) were at least somewhat satisfied with their jobs. Conversely, 17 per cent were somewhat dissatisfied, and four per cent were very dissatisfied. Levels of satisfaction were very similar by school phase. However, senior leaders reported higher levels of satisfaction than classroom teachers. For example, 45

per cent of senior leaders were very satisfied with their jobs, compared with 23 per cent of classroom teachers.

Table 4. How satisfied are you with your job as a teacher?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Very satisfied	28%	28%	27%
Somewhat satisfied	45%	46%	44%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6%	5%	8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	17%	16%	17%
Very dissatisfied	4%	4%	3%
Local base (N)	1675	921	750

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Teachers answered a set of follow-up questions on the top three causes of dissatisfaction, if any. The questions provided them with a range of options to choose from, including 'none' and 'other'. Table 5 shows the responses regarding teachers' top cause of dissatisfaction in their current job. Four issues came through very strongly:

- constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education (20%)
- insufficient time to do work adequately (19%)
- amount of bureaucracy or paperwork (17%)
- the pressure of assessment targets and inspections (17%).

Six per cent of teachers also expressed concern about the erosion of teachers' pensions. The remaining options were selected by, at most, three per cent of teachers. It is worth noting that even though 28 per cent of respondents indicated that they are 'very satisfied' with their jobs in the previous question, only two per cent chose the 'none' option for this question. There were some differences in responses by phase of education. Bureaucracy was more of an issue for primary school teachers than secondary (23% compared with 8% selected this). A slightly larger proportion of secondary teachers selected policy changes (23%) and insufficient time (23%) as their top cause of dissatisfaction compared to primary teachers (17% and 16% respectively).

The top causes of dissatisfaction were similar across senior leaders and classroom teachers. The exception to this was bureaucracy and paperwork. Specifically, classroom teachers were proportionally more likely than senior leaders to list this as their top cause of dissatisfaction (19% compared with 10% did so).

Table 5. What, if any, is the top cause of dissatisfaction in your current job?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Amount of bureaucracy/paperwork	17%	23%	8%
Low pay	3%	3%	3%
Insufficient time to do my work adequately	19%	16%	23%
Constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education	20%	17%	23%
Concerns about changed/changing governance of my school	1%	<1%	1%
Concerns about erosion of teachers' pensions	6%	5%	6%
Poor standards of pupil behaviour	3%	1%	6%
Low status of the teaching profession	3%	4%	3%
Vulnerability of teachers to career-damaging allegations	<1%	1%	<1%
Lack of appreciation of my efforts/contribution within my school	2%	2%	2%
Bullying from senior staff	2%	2%	3%
Poor working relationship with senior staff	1%	1%	1%
Pressure of assessment targets and inspections	17%	19%	14%
Lack of opportunities for career progression	2%	1%	2%
Other (please give details below)	3%	3%	3%
None	2%	2%	3%
Local base (N)	1676	924	748

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Teachers then selected the second top cause of dissatisfaction from the same list. As Table 6 shows, the four most common responses were the same as before, with between 17 per cent and 19 per cent of teachers selecting these. Again, primary teachers were slightly more likely than secondary teachers to identify bureaucracy or paperwork as a cause of dissatisfaction (22% compared with 15%).

Table 6. What, if any, is the second top cause of dissatisfaction in your current job?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Amount of bureaucracy/paperwork	19%	22%	15%
Low pay	3%	3%	3%
Insufficient time to do my work adequately	17%	16%	19%
Constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education	18%	19%	18%
Concerns about changed/changing governance of my school	1%	1%	1%
Concerns about erosion of teachers' pensions	8%	6%	9%
Poor standards of pupil behaviour	3%	3%	4%
Low status of the teaching profession	3%	4%	2%
Vulnerability of teachers to career-damaging allegations	1%	1%	1%
Lack of appreciation of my efforts/contribution within my school	3%	3%	3%
Bullying from senior staff	1%	1%	1%
Poor working relationship with senior staff	1%	1%	1%
Pressure of assessment targets and inspections	17%	17%	16%
Lack of opportunities for career progression	2%	2%	3%
Other	1%	1%	1%
None	2%	2%	2%
Local base (N)	1636	905	727

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Finally, teachers selected the third top cause of their dissatisfaction. Table 7 shows that the same four issues were prominent (these were selected by between 12% and 17% of teachers). However, concerns about pensions featured more strongly here, with 11 per cent of teachers indicating this as their third top cause of dissatisfaction. In addition, seven per cent of teachers felt dissatisfied with the low status of the teaching profession.

Table 7. What, if any, is the third top cause of dissatisfaction in your current job?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Amount of bureaucracy/paperwork	13%	14%	12%
Low pay	3%	4%	3%
Insufficient time to do my work adequately	12%	12%	11%
Constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education	17%	17%	16%
Concerns about changed/changing governance of my school	2%	2%	1%
Concerns about erosion of teachers' pensions	11%	11%	11%
Poor standards of pupil behaviour	5%	3%	7%
Low status of the teaching profession	7%	7%	7%
Vulnerability of teachers to career-damaging allegations	1%	1%	1%
Lack of appreciation of my efforts/contribution within my school	5%	4%	6%
Bullying from senior staff	1%	1%	1%
Poor working relationship with senior staff	1%	1%	2%
Pressure of assessment targets and inspections	16%	17%	16%
Lack of opportunities for career progression	2%	2%	3%
Other (please give details below)	3%	3%	3%
None	2%	2%	3%
Local base (N)	1594	883	708

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

A small proportion of teachers offered 'other' causes of dissatisfaction that were not listed. The most common were: Ofsted constant changes/unhelpful (13%, N = 16), overworked/uneven work life balance (13%, N = 15), and Government/Local Authority (12%, N = 12).

Performance management and a professional body for teachers

The next set of questions addressed teachers' views on performance management and whether there should be a professional body for teachers. First, teachers were asked about how scale points on the main pay scale should be awarded. Table 8 shows that three-quarters of teachers felt that scale points should be linked to performance. Specifically, just over half (52%) felt that teachers should be awarded scale points annually, unless they are judged to have performed poorly. A further 23 per cent felt that the conditions should be more stringent, and scale points should only be awarded to those teachers who are judged to have performed well. However, more than a quarter (26%) felt that performance should not have an influence, and that scale points should be awarded annually to all teachers. Views were very similar across phases, but differed by seniority. Senior leaders were more in favour of a stricter system than classroom teachers. For example, senior leaders were proportionally less likely to endorse awarding scale points to all teachers (11% compared with 29%) and more likely to agree that only highly-performing teachers should be awarded scale points (39% compared with 18%).

Table 8. In your view, should scale points for teachers on the Main Pay Scale be awarded annually to:

	All	Primary	Secondary
All teachers	26%	25%	26%
Those teachers judged to have performed well	23%	23%	22%
All teachers, apart from those judged to have performed poorly	52%	52%	53%
Local base (N)	1672	921	748

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Teachers then gave their views on how performance should be judged. They were given a list of options and were able to select more than one. As Table 9 shows, teachers felt that performance should be judged using a range of methods. About two-thirds (66%) of teachers felt that performance should be judged, at least in part, by more senior staff such as their line manager. About half (48%) felt that the headteacher should contribute to assessment of performance. A similar proportion (46%) thought that their pupils' progress and attainment should play a role. Self-assessment and peer-assessment were also considered suitable methods by fairly large proportions of teachers (36% and 24%, respectively). Notably, only eight per cent of teachers felt that performance should be

judged by Ofsted inspections of their lessons. This indicates that teachers would prefer to be assessed by someone within the school, whether that is their line manager, their headteachers, their colleagues and/or themselves.

There was a marked difference in the opinions of primary and secondary teachers regarding performance assessment by the headteacher. This was the most heavily endorsed method among primary teachers, with almost two-thirds (65%) selecting this option. In contrast, only a third (27%) of secondary teachers shared this view. This could be partly due to the fact that primary schools are, on average, much smaller than secondary schools and there may be closer relationships between headteachers and their staff as a result.

Looking at responses by seniority, the main differences related to assessment by the headteacher and assessment by peers. Almost two-thirds (64%) of senior leaders felt that performance should be assessed by the headteacher, compared with 44 per cent of classroom teachers. Conversely, peer assessment was proportionally more popular among classroom teachers; more than a quarter (27%) felt this was a suitable method of evaluation, compared with 14 per cent of senior leaders. However, senior leaders were no more likely than classroom teachers to endorse Ofsted lesson inspections as a method of performance assessment (both 8%).

Table 9. How do you think the performance of a teacher should be judged?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Assessment by the headteacher	48%	65%	27%
Assessment by more senior staff (e.g. by their line manager)	66%	63%	69%
Peer assessment by other teachers	24%	21%	28%
Considering the progress and results of pupils they currently teach	46%	46%	45%
Ofsted inspectors' grading of their lessons	8%	8%	7%
Self-evaluation of their performance	36%	37%	33%
Other means	6%	5%	7%
Local base (N)	1676	923	749

Respondents were able to select more than one response so percentages may sum to more than 100. Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total.
 Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

The next question related to the recent planned change in the Government's approach to poorly-performing teachers. It asked teachers whether they agreed that poorly-performing teachers should be dismissed within about a term. As Table 10 shows, just over half (54%) of teachers disagreed to some extent, with a fifth (20%) strongly disagreeing. Conversely, about a third (30%) agreed to some extent, although only eight

per cent strongly agreed with the new approach. Fifteen per cent of teachers took a neutral stance on this issue. As with previous topics, views were quite similar across phases, but differed by seniority. Senior leaders were proportionally far more likely to agree or strongly agree with the Government's plans (51% compared with 24% of classroom teachers). This may reflect a greater sense of vulnerability among less senior staff as a result of these changes.

Table 10. To what extent do you agree that poorly performing teachers should be dismissed within about a term in line with the Government's plans?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	8%	8%	7%
Agree	22%	22%	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%	15%	15%
Disagree	34%	35%	33%
Strongly disagree	20%	17%	22%
Don't know	2%	3%	1%
Local base (N)	1678	924	750

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

The next question asked for teachers' views on being a part of a professional body in the same way as accountants, doctors and lawyers are. Only 13 per cent did not agree that this should be the case. Almost two-thirds either agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should have a professional body of this type. A fifth (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 11. To what extent do you agree that qualified teachers should be members of a professional body in the same way that accountants, doctors and lawyers are?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	25%	23%	27%
Agree	39%	39%	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	20%	19%
Disagree	9%	8%	10%
Strongly disagree	4%	4%	4%
Don't know	4%	5%	3%
Local base (N)	1677	924	750

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Oxbridge

The next set of questions was filtered to secondary teachers only, as they related to applications and admissions to Oxbridge Universities. First, teachers were asked to estimate what percentage of Oxbridge undergraduates from UK schools and colleges come from the state sector. Recent figures for the actual proportion are 55 per cent for Oxford in 2010⁶ and 59 per cent for Cambridge in 2010⁷. Table 12 shows that eight out of ten (79%) teachers underestimated the proportion, thinking it was less than half. The table also shows that the underestimation was quite extreme in many cases. A third believed it to be 20 per cent or less and almost a quarter (23%) thought it was in the region of 21 to 30 per cent. Furthermore, there was very little difference in the beliefs of senior leaders compared with classroom teachers.

Table 12. At Oxbridge, what percentage of students from UK schools and colleges on undergraduate courses come from the state sector?

	Secondary Teachers
Up to 20%	32%
21 to 30%	23%
31 to 40%	14%
41 to 50%	10%
51 to 60%	5%
61 to 70%	1%
71 to 80%	<1%
more than 81%	0%
Don't know	14%
Local base (N)	730

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.*

Keeping with this theme, we then asked teachers about the frequency with which they advise their academically gifted pupils to apply to Oxbridge. Table 13 below shows that responses were varied. Almost a fifth said they never advise their academically gifted pupils to apply to Oxbridge. Just under a half said they always or usually do (16% and 28% respectively). On this question there were differences by seniority. Senior leaders were more likely than classroom teachers to advise their pupils in this way: 26 per cent

⁶ Oxford University (2011). *Entry 2010: Undergraduate admissions statistics* [online]. Available http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/facts_and_figures/undergraduate_admissions_statistics/ [15 March 2012]

⁷ Cambridge University (2011) *Cambridge University Reporter Special No 14* [online] Available http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2010-11/special/14/undergrad_stats.pdf [22nd March 2012]

said they always do, compared with 14 per cent of classroom teachers, and 36 per cent said they usually do, compared with 26 per cent of classroom teachers. It is possible that this is due to some senior leaders having more involvement in university applications or careers advice in their schools.

Table 13. Which of the following best describes the frequency with which you advise the academically-gifted pupils that you teach (or have taught) to apply to Oxbridge?

	Secondary Teachers
Always	16%
Usually	28%
Rarely	29%
Never	19%
Don't know	10%
Local base (N)	730

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Conclusions and implications

Academies and Free Schools

Large proportions of teachers were not in favour of schools becoming Academies, especially if they are required to do so by the Government. The majority also disagreed with the Government's policy to encourage the setting up of Free Schools. Large proportions of teachers responded 'don't know' to these questions, suggesting that there may be confusion or a lack of information among teachers in relation to academies and Free Schools. This survey did not explore the reasons behind teachers' views on this topic. However, previous NFER research conducted for the Sutton Trust⁸ revealed a concern among teachers that Academies and Free Schools could lead to increased social segregation between schools and may not contribute to improved educational outcomes for less privileged children.

Job satisfaction

Responses indicated that most teachers were satisfied with their jobs, with senior leaders in particular reporting high levels of satisfaction. However, a substantial proportion of teachers were not satisfied. When teachers were asked to identify the main causes of dissatisfaction, four issues came across strongly. These were: constant change resulting from new initiatives and policies in education; insufficient time to do work adequately; amount of bureaucracy or paperwork; and the pressure of assessment targets and inspections. These responses indicate that external changes and pressures are prevalent sources of dissatisfaction among teachers.

Performance management

Most teachers agreed that increases in pay should be linked to performance. The findings also indicate that teachers considered a range of methods to be suitable for assessing their performance. However, the vast majority felt that this should be done by someone within the school. Having said this, most teachers considered it a good idea to be part of a professional body. This is an important finding in the context of Michael Gove's decision to abolish the General Teaching Council (GTC). From 1st April, a new body, the Teaching Agency will be responsible for regulation of the profession, along with the supply, retention and quality of the workforce⁹. However, it is unclear whether this new body will have a supportive role for teachers (as, for example, the British Medical Council has for doctors). The results of this survey indicate that most teachers would like to have the same representation as doctors, lawyers and accountants.

⁸ NFER (2010). *The Government's education reforms* [online]. Available <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/what-we-offer/teacher-voice/PDFs/Sutton-Trust-Nov2010.pdf> [15 March 2012]

⁹ Department for Education (2012). *The Teaching Agency* [online]. Available <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/armslengthbodies/b0077806/the-teaching-agency/about-the-teaching-agency> [19 March 2012]

Oxbridge

The results of the survey show that secondary school teachers clearly underestimate the proportion of students at Oxbridge that are from the state sector. This finding is in line with the previous research on this topic mentioned earlier and the results were strikingly similar. The direct effect of this erroneous belief cannot be gleaned from this survey. However, as discussed earlier, the Sutton Trust has suggested that this is a contributing factor to the under-representation of state school pupils at Oxbridge. Certainly there is a need for secondary school teachers in the maintained sector to receive accurate information on this subject. Clearly state school pupils cannot be accepted to selective universities if they do not apply in the first place. This survey indicates that teachers at state secondary schools (and especially classroom teachers) could do more to actively encourage their academically gifted pupils to do so.

Supporting information

How was the survey conducted?

This report is based on data from the February 2012 survey. A panel of 1686 practising teachers from 1269 schools in the maintained sector in England completed the survey. Teachers completed the survey online between the 17th and 29th February 2012. During the survey period, a team of experienced coders within the Foundation coded all 'open' questions (those without a pre-identified set of responses).

What was the composition of the panel?

The panel included teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from headteachers to newly qualified class teachers. Fifty five per cent (921) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 45 per cent (765) were teaching in secondary schools.

How representative of schools nationally were the schools corresponding to the teachers panel?

There was an under-representation of schools in the highest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals in the sample of primary schools. In the sample of secondary schools and for the overall sample (primary and secondary schools) there was under-representation in the highest quintile and over-representation in the lowest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals. To address this, weights were calculated using free school meals factors to create a more balanced sample. Due to the differences between the populations of primary schools and secondary schools, different weights were created for primary schools, secondary schools and then for the whole sample overall. The weightings have been applied to all of the analyses referred to in this commentary and contained within the tables supplied in electronic format (via Pulsar Web)¹⁰.

Tables S.1, S.2 and S.3 show the representation of the weighted achieved sample against the population. Table S.4 shows the representation of the weighted teacher sample by role in school.

¹⁰ The sample was not weighted for missing free school meal data

Table S.1 Representation of (weighted) primary schools compared to primary schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (Overall performance by KS2 2011 data)	Lowest band	19	15
	2nd lowest band	18	18
	Middle band	17	18
	2nd highest band	21	23
	Highest band	25	25
	Missing	0	0
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	0	0
Primary school type	Infants	9	10
	First School	5	4
	Infant & Junior (Primary)	77	73
	First & Middle	0	0
	Junior	7	11
	Middle deemed Primary	0	1
	Academy	2	2
Region	North	31	24
	Midlands	32	30
	South	37	47
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	47
Number of schools		16798	801

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012

Table S.2 Representation of (weighted) secondary schools compared to secondary schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (Overall performance by GCSE 2010 data)	Lowest band	16	16
	2nd lowest band	20	19
	Middle band	19	22
	2nd highest band	18	21
	Highest band	19	19
	Missing	7	4
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	0
Secondary school type	Middle	6	3
	Secondary Modern	3	1
	Comprehensive to 16	26	22
	Comprehensive to 18	32	42
	Grammar	5	6
	Other secondary school	0	0
	Academies	28	26
Region	North	29	24
	Midlands	33	31
	South	38	44
Local Authority type	London Borough	13	14
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	19	19
	Counties	47	46
Number of schools		3255	468

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent.

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Table S.3 Representation of all schools (weighted) compared to all schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (By KS2 2011 and GCSE 2010 data)	Lowest band	18	16
	2nd lowest band	18	18
	Middle band	17	20
	2nd highest band	20	22
	Highest band	24	22
	Missing	1	1
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	0	0
Region	North	30	24
	Midlands	32	30
	South	37	46
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	46
Number of schools		20017	1269

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Table S.4 Comparison of the achieved (weighted) sample with the national population by grade of teacher

Role	Primary schools				Secondary schools			
	National Population		NFER Sample		National Population		NFER Sample	
	N*	%	N	%	N*	%	N	%
Headteachers	16.8*	10	86	9	3.2*	2	13	2
Deputy Headteachers	11.7*	7	103	11	5.3*	3	23	3
Assistant Headteachers	6.5*	4	54	6	11.4*	6	72	10
Class teachers and others	131.8*	79	682	74	160.0*	89	643	86

*Population N is expressed in thousands

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012, DfE: School Workforce in England (including pupil:teacher ratios and pupil:adult ratios), January 2010

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000927/index.shtml> [12March 2012].

How accurately do the findings represent the national position?

Precision is a measure of the extent to which the results of different samples agree with each other. If we drew a different sample of teachers would we get the same results? The more data that is available the more precise the findings. For all schools and a 50 per cent response, the precision of that response is between 47.61 per cent and 52.39per cent. For secondary schools the same precision is + and – 3.54 percentage points and for primary schools it is + and – 3.23 percentage points.

With the weightings applied to the data, we are confident that the omnibus sample is broadly representative of teachers nationally and provides a robust analysis of teachers' views.